



## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT: AN OVERVIEW

*\*Dr. Sahebrao Hiwale And \*\*Dr. Vijaykumar Parsode*

*\*Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, Vinayakrao Patil Mahavidyalaya Vijapur, Dist. Aurangabad-MS.*

*\*\*Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Vinayakrao Patil Mahavidyalaya Vijapur, Dist. Aurangabad-MS*

### Abstract:

*In modern times, the concepts of public participation and rural development are frequently mentioned in developed and developing nations globally. Scholars, especially those related to the social sciences, have always written and researched on social development and public participation. Even then, there is no consensus on a clear definition of development and public participation or how to measure it. For those who prioritize economic needs, development means economic progress. But those for whom social and human values are important include human-related development in the definition of development. Public participation in rural development has always been in the context of Indian rural society. But through the present study, an attempt is being made to shed light on such an event in which more and more public participation is sought*

**Keywords:** *Rural Development, Rural India, Need of Participation and rural leadership*

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### Methodology :

The Topic of Present research paper 'Public Participation and Rural Development: An Overview' is related to secondary data. Secondary data sources are used like reference books, research reports and papers. The topic of research goes through scientific research process from formulation of problem to till last step of research.

### Objectives of the Study :

The study is undertaken with following specific objectives in view:

1. To study the condition of rural development in India.
2. To know the reality of public participation in rural development.

### Hypothesis :

Following hypothesis was put forward for proposed research paper.

1. Rural development programs are played vital role in the development of rural India.
2. Public participation is essential for succussing rural development programs.



### **Theoretical framework :**

The present study is related to various theories of social change and development in sociology but it relates appropriately to Rostow's step theory, because the theme of concern theory of development and this principle matching with the principle of people awareness, public participation and rural development. So, this theoretical base is used to analyse data during present study.

### **Rural Development :**

The rural area is different from the urban area in many ways. The residential area was first created through the status of the rural area, the arrangement of relationships and the correlation between relationships and family organizations and later came to be known as the rural area. One bitter truth is that "urban development has taken place at the expense of rural areas."<sup>1</sup> In modern times, however, rural areas are being neglected due to the growing influence of urban culture.

In fact, the subject of rural development is an old one, but it is constantly coming up with new dimensions due to the inclusion of new issues and ideas. The old definition of rural development was seen as a group of villages. It is because of this command that the village development work failed in the early days. Only landlords, moneylenders and powerful people took advantage of these programs.<sup>2</sup> Copp defines rural development as a process that "aims to improve the living conditions of people living outside of urban areas through collective efforts, as well as to provide them with the necessary opportunities to achieve their goals."<sup>3</sup> He goes on to say that the ultimate goal of rural development is people, not infrastructure. In his view, the goal of rural development should be to have many options open to the people. According to Anchor Desmond, "Rural development is the coordination of strategies, policies or programs adopted to raise the living standards of the rural population by making full use of the available physical and human resources to build agriculture, fisheries, rural industries, handicrafts as well as social and economic systems in rural areas."<sup>4</sup>

Explaining rural development, Mishra and Sundaram has said, "Rural development as not merely development of rural areas but also the development of quality of the life of the rural masses in self-reliant and self-sustaining modern little communities. Rural development, is therefore a development of rural areas in such a way that each component of rural life changes in a desired direction."<sup>5</sup> The present definition highlights the quality of life in rural development and its sustainability as a whole from the point of view of development of rural people in the expected direction.

In third world countries, the onset of development is generally linked to the rate of growth in agricultural production. The fact is that the very concept of rural development was developed in the context of agricultural development and this equation was accepted for a long time. In 1928 a similar definition has been given by the appointed Royal Commission on Agriculture. Nearly five decades later, in 1972, under the direction of the Planning Commission, a similar task was set up by a task force set up for the Integrated Rural Development Program.

The World Bank has also commented on rural development, saying, "The program that improves the economic and social status of the rural poor or similar groups is called rural development. Also, the benefits of development are



extended to the poorest of the poor in rural areas. This includes smallholders, sharecroppers, as well as landless agricultural laborers, etc. According to the World Bank, the goal of rural development is not limited to specific area but it should be extending at large areas. The multifaceted effects of development, on the one hand, increase agricultural productivity, create new planning opportunities, improve health and education, increase media resources, and improve people's living standards."6 That is why the World Bank focuses on developing the economic and social status of the poor only through rural development. Explaining rural development, Uma Lata says, "Rural development in terms of living of rural people."7 And according to R. T. Tiwari and R. C. Sinha, "The term 'Rural' means an area which is characterized by non-Urban style of life, occupational structure, Social organization and settlement pattern. Development is defined in terms of technological or industrial development. But development of rural people means raising the standard of their living. It is the development of rural areas through the extension of irrigation facilities, Improvements in the techniques of cultivation, expansion of electricity, constructions of school buildings, provision of education facilities, health care and road, etc."8

Although there are views among the above thinkers on the concept of 'Rural Development', the researcher has used the concept of 'Rural Development' for poverty alleviation and distributive justice with a holistic and comprehensive approach to this research work. This will lead to economic transformation and achieve the primary objectives of rural development which are as follows.

1. Improving standard of living, providing food, clothing, shelter, employment and education.
2. To increase productivity in rural areas and reduce poverty levels.
3. To increase public participation in planning and development through decision making and decentralization of power.
4. To establish equal opportunities and justice in the society.

Neglected development requires strategy rather than any theory because development is a long-term process. Therefore, various rural development schemes are implemented strategically to reach rural development.

### **Public Participation:**

Rural development cannot be achieved single handed. Development programs and processes do not gain momentum unless people from the target group participate in development programs. In the present study, the concept of 'public participation' has been considered as a process in which the weaker person, the depressed person in the society has been able to believe in the theism till date. They don't believe in karma, they don't believe in science, they don't even know about these events. But their outlook on life has totally changed through rural development programs. It has created awareness and at present individuals are participating in village development programs or schemes, are responding to it. In the end, it has to be said that they are beginning to understand their role in the process of rural development. And by fulfilling that role properly, it is helping to achieve the aspirations of the village development plan and program. The role of the common or targeted person in all these processes, the role of the local leadership and the active role of the administrative officers and staff at the implementation level will be understood as public participation.



When public participation is not only in the form of feedback or benefits, but also in the rural development work of some individual benefit, financial contribution is also important in such an event. These programs are incomplete without financial contributions or capital. So the response to such a rural development program, the benefits they have received and the development that has resulted from it, rural development as an alternative. All these processes are expected in the concept of 'public participation'. This is appropriate in the context of the target group. But without the vision of the local leadership, their participation in the rural development program depends on how efficiently the local leadership carries out all the tasks of implementing the village development plans, carrying out the plans or programs and implementing them successfully. The rural people are neglected; there will also be the vision and efficiency of the local leadership. However, these rural development plans and programs fall entirely under the workspace of government officials. The participation of government officials and employees in determining their attitude towards rural development plans or programs and how they play their role is determined.

Public participation is generally at three different levels like high, medium and low-level public participation. High level public participation is the response and role or contribution related to decision making, evaluation, implementation, etc. It is characterized by high level public participation. Medium level public participation is related to financial contribution, labour, and moral support or sharing of benefits in the public interest etc., while low level of public participation is also related to moral support or distribution of benefits.

No rural development plan or program can achieve a definite goal for rural development without the active participation of people at all three levels i. e. people at the administrative level, local leadership and common rural people.

### **The Need for Public Participation :**

Efforts have been made at various levels since pre-independence for the development of rural communities in India. The planned development program was undertaken by the Government of India to achieve the overall progress of the country even after independence and to achieve the objective of creating a welfare state in a democratic way with the help of the five-year plan. The first five-year plan in the country was launched in 1951. The rulers and thinkers of India soon realized that the successful implementation of the Five-Year Plan depended entirely on rural development. Because 80% of the people in India live in rural areas, the overall progress of the country is not possible until the backwardness of the rural community is removed and their development is accelerated. "Then, on October 2nd, 1952, the government launched community development programs to accelerate the five-year plans and bring development to the country."9 The launch of the Community Development Program was truly a revolutionary initiative in the field of rural development. But after a while, when we saw the results of this program, the information that came ahead was very important and that was the failure of the program to reach the last elements of the society. After analyzing the causes of this failure, one becomes aware of the need for public participation.

### **Conclusion :**

In the present research paper, information related to rural development and public participation in rural development work is given in detail. The history of rural society from time immemorial to the present has been studied in detail the



ups and downs in the process of transformation as well as the terms rural development, rural development programs and public participation.

The need for public participation for rural development and the success of rural development programs, people's attitude towards rural development programs, etc. are discussed in detail. The history of rural development work as a whole is clear from the experiments of rural development at the semi-governmental and voluntary level during the pre-independence period and the participation of the people for rural development and village transformation and the success of the program. In the post-independence period, the Government of India paid special attention to the rural areas for the development of the society. Various schemes and programs have been implemented for this, but a lack of experience at the government level is observed there. It is imperative to get public participation and people's response for the success of rural development programs from the experiences and studies that have come to fill this gap. Once this is confirmed, the schemes and programs implemented in that manner are also reviewed in this research paper.

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